

western cape scouter



June 2021



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editor's desk



We congratulate Paddy Milner, our Regional Commissioner, on being awarded the Bar to the Silver Protea. Paddy has contributed to the success of Revit, Scouting in Schools, and continues to ensure the Western Cape Region is managed superbly from a business/financial sense to Regional facilities and personnel to negotiations with the Western Cape Government and the City of Cape Town.

For more information on what is happening on the Western Cape Region, remember to ensure you are subscribed to the Western Cape Scouters email list by going to

www.scouts.org.za/about-us/contact-us/mailling-lists/. Also, watch our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/ScoutsWesternCape.

A medium resolution version of the Western Cape Scouter is emailed to the Scouter's list. A high resolution version is available in Scout Wiki at scoutwiki.scouts.org.za/wiki/Western_Cape_Scouter.

Thank-you to all the contributors to this edition of the Western Cape Scouter. Articles for future editions are always welcome. A simple unformatted email with attached action photos sent to nigel.forshaw@scouts.org.za are perfect. Your District and Group news is of interest. Let us know about some of the fantastic activities which your Meerkats, Cubs, Scouts and Rovers have been involved in.

Nigel Forshaw - Editor Western Cape Scouter

regional commissioner's reflections



Once again we can reflect on a really challenging period for us all. The current third wave of COVID infections gives us cause to pause and truly appreciate life.



Within Scouting we have been hard hit with the loss of close colleagues, peers and friends. Within family circles the losses of loved ones has been tragic. We must all face this devastating virus together. We must do everything to protect ourselves our families and those around us. Masking, distancing, washing hands and being outdoors are the basics.

We are needing to maintain a fine balance between taking all precautions and still going about our daily lives. In Scouting we need to be flexible in all our activities, meetings and happenings.

This means accepting inevitable last minute changes to plans, inconvenient but important protocols, limits to numbers and to what can be done. We must draw on our Scouting spirit and values to ensure we all keep smiling and whistling under all these conditions.

You will read about many ongoing activities, adventures and the fun stuff many Groups and members are still able to do. Creative thinking is driving new ways to enjoy Scouting. Well done to all.



We are starting to grow our Meerkats now with 9 Dens open already and numbers growing weekly. There is a huge demand for Meerkats, don't let your Group be left behind.

Enjoy the read and keep scouting. Stay Safe.

Paddy Milner - Regional Commissioner

new scout group in claremont?

1st Claremont is on the lookout for leaders of a new Cub Pack and Scout Troop in Claremont.

There is a waiting list for Cub and Scout places in Claremont that the existing groups aren't able to fill, and the plan is to reopen a group at the 4th Claremont hall in Almond Street.

If you or someone you know might be interested in becoming a leader at this group, or helping the new group in some way, please contact ian.webb@scouts.org.za / 078 255 1122.

Ian Webb - Scout Group Leader 1st Claremont



chief commissioner visits wcr

After more than a year of Covid-19 Lockdown restrictions, I was very conscious of not having participated meaningfully in any Scouting activities in the Western Cape. The Region's Awards Evening provided the opportunity, and after juggling some work commitments, was soon 'winging' my way down to Cape Town on a Thursday afternoon.

I thought it fitting to be recognising the contribution of so many volunteers, just days after Volunteer Appreciation Day on the 20th April. The Monte Vista Scout Hall was suitably 'decked out' for the occasion and there was a brief opportunity to interact with some of the recipients, given our social distancing requirements. My thanks to all those Scouters who received awards, for your continued contribution and commitment to our members. You are making a difference in the lives of others.



A highlight for me was the 60-year Service Bar to John 'Haggis' Potter, the first occasion where I have had to present an award for such lengthy service. I'm sure it won't be the last. Then a special mention of the two Cornwall Scout Gallantry Awards, firstly to Ayden Braaf (aged 17) from the 1st Belhar Scout Group for dealing with a fire in a neighbour's house, and then Braedon Powell (aged 11) from 1st Muizenberg Sea Scouts for rescuing two swimmers in difficulty. Your calm and decisive actions certainly prevented a potential tragedy and are an example for us all. Well done.

Regional Commissioner, Paddy Milner, was also recognised for his leadership and continued efforts to promote Scouting in the Region, with a Bar to the Order of the Silver Protea. Unfortunately, Paddy was unable to attend the event, so this award was presented in absentia. Thanks Paddy for your support and contribution both locally and as part of the National Team. The Scouting in Schools initiative is certainly one of our flagship growth projects, and the Region can be justly proud of what has been achieved to date.

The following day, in between various work meetings, I managed to spend some time with the staff at the National Office and met with some of the interns participating in the Scouting in Schools project. Later that evening, I visited the 1st Bergvliet Scout Group and participated in the investiture of eight Scouts, then a brief visit to 2nd Plumstead, before ending the evening with another investiture ceremony at the 1st Pinelands Scout Group. While I could only get to a few Scout Troops that evening, I was impressed with the number of young leaders involved in running the programme and taking leadership responsibility for these units. Scouting is clearly happening and in a healthy state in the Western Cape!

Finally, my thanks to Paddy Milner and his regional team for hosting me and for all their collective efforts to support Scouting in the region. I look forward to my next visit.

Gary Pienaar - Chief Commissioner

1st muizenberg meekat launch



1st Muizenberg officially opened its Meerkat Den on 28 May 2021 with a well-attended Open Day that was a great success. Nineteen five and six year olds enjoyed their first meeting and we have it on good authority that they couldn't wait for more. Even the parents had a great time as many of the activities were met with applause. Our new Den Scouter, Marihett (aka Rafiki) is the third member of her family being invested into the group and is a wonderful addition to our 1st Muizenberg family. New Pup, Grace, said she was sad when she woke up on Saturday morning because there was no Den Meeting. She can be seen practising her Meerkat greeting

at a Pack Outing to Giraffe House a few weeks ago. Thanks very much to Angela Hillier and Den Scouters from other Dens for their valued assistance in getting our Den going. 1st Muizenberg Meerkats promise to Be Kind and Stand Tall!

Angela Lee-Wright - SGL 1st Muizenberg



springbok service project

When looking at a need in the community, I reached out to a few people to see how I could assist and decided to help at Ikhaya le Themba. This day care centre, which means "house of Hope", is situated in Imizamo Yethu. They are an after-school care for children between the ages of 6-13. After various discussions, a plan was put together to run the project. It was split into 2 parts - the first part was based on interaction with the children, teaching them some useful scouting skills and leadership. This was done through some awesome activities which included: knotting, pioneering construction, mapping and navigation. These were all run as team exercises and the children were all given the opportunity to take the initiative to lead and gain valuable skills.



Dominic explaining the values contained in the Scout Laws and improving his Xhosa translations



Children learning some pioneering skills at Ikhaya le Themba

springbok service project

The second part of the project was physical where we offered our help around the site. There were a some places that were in need of some maintenance and where we could add some value. We sanded and varnished all the wooden window sills and frames, made a history timeline of the day care centre, planted a garden and made 40 fluffy toys which were given to some of the younger children. Another bigger project, which sparked my interest, was to implement a food waste system. Ikhaya le Themba makes food for the children everyday and as a result has a some food waste. We set up different bins in the kitchen and then made two large compost heaps, where they could turn this waste into nutrient-rich soil to be added to the new veggie gardens. It was amazing to do this project with Ikhaya le Themba - they are an amazing facility, giving hope to many children and are run by an awesome team. I am so grateful for the opportunity to offer assistance and to go there with the children - leading, inspiring, learning and being of help.



The fluffy toys handed to Ikhaya le Themba

Dominic Holling- Springbok Scout 2nd Hout Bay



Sanding down window frames in preparation for varnishing

springbok service project



The rockery was rehabilitated and Agapanthus planted



The composts heaps being put to good use

heritage centre visits



The Gilwood Scout Training and Heritage Centre is located in Goodwood and probably has one of the largest collections of Scouting memorabilia in its museum section, in the Southern Hemisphere. Much of this can be attributed to the original 'founding fathers' who over many years of hard work put this collection together. The 'torch' is however still being carried today by a

small spirited group of senior citizens who have been in the movement for many years. Applying all the necessary Covid requirements, Mick, 'Haggis' and Stuart meet nearly every Thursday morning at the museum, and apart from the tea and biscuits, spend their time sorting and cataloguing the vast number of badges, artefacts and memorabilia.

How can the Scout Museum help you in these Covid times? Are you looking for programme or outing that is somewhat different?

We run a 'Treasure Hunt' for the Cubs in the museum and all the Akela has to do is open and close the meeting. The Cubs are sorted into pairs and then into three teams. They then search the displays looking for answers to relatively easy questions, but it is more about fun and discovery. Any day or time can be arranged. We have even had Saturday morning visits with a picnic lunch in the grounds. Check with Eleanor Brown at HQ to see if Gilwood is being used by the Training Team and get Stuart Ravenscroft's contact details.

If a Troop Scouter can think of an activity they would like to run at the museum, you are more than welcome, we are open to any ideas.

And what about the parents, grandparents or a friend that may have been a Scout? They too are most welcome to visit the museum, preferably on a Thursday morning for a tour and they will even get a cup of tea and a friendly chat.

For those that prefer the digital space, much of the Western and Eastern Cape Scouting history can now be found at the Scoutwiki website scoutwiki.scouts.org.za. Search for 'history' or 'heritage'.

Stuart Ravenscroft - The Heritage Team



western cape hq

Eleanor Brown is the Western Cape Regional administrator and she is the person behind ensuring the programmes for BP Sunday awards ceremonies are put together, bank statements are reconciled against competition and badge course



entries, etc. and amongst many other jobs. Eleanor assists the Regional Commissioner in tasks that we are often not even aware of. Here Eleanor is ensuring that the right number of City Nature Challenge badges are available for participating Groups. If ever there is a job that needs to be done and Eleanor is asked to do it, she is right there assisting the Region.

We congratulate Eleanor for gaining the 10 year service award.

Thank-you Eleanor for all you do for the Region.

city nature challenge

The City Nature Challenge is an annual world wide community science challenge where citizen scientists take photographs of our natural history including mammals, insects, fungi, birds and plants. It is run by the California Academy of Sciences and the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles. All observations had to be made over 4 days in April/May 2021. Cape Town and the Garden Route participated and Meerkats, Cubs, Scouts, Rovers, Scouters and parents uploaded their observations to the iNaturalist website. Scouts from Cape Town contributed 12.7% of the total data and Garden Route 3.8%. Daniel Berman of 1st Camps Bay won a prize from the City of Cape Town for the most observations for a Cub. See left for his observation of a crab observed on the lower slopes of Table Mountain. Kaylee and Luke Fittock of 2nd Kenridge were awarded a prize for the most observations submitted by a Scout while Hendré Barnard, a 1st Durbanville Rover, was awarded a prize for submitting the most number of observations for Cape Town by any one person.



All those who submitted 10 or more observations are entitled to wear the City Nature Challenge event badge, shown above, on their uniform which is now available from Western Cape HQ.

Scouts SA earned much kudos from the City of Cape Town for taking part in this activity and was a great advert for the Movement. Well done to all participants. Thanks to the City of Cape Town, Garden Route and SANBI for the local organising.

Nigel Forshaw - RTC Scout Programme

smc devil's peak

Cape Town's skyline is naturally dominated by mountain peaks, and one of the least explored and maybe most feared is Devil's Peak. Early on the morning of 10 April



2021, Jonathan Webb of 1st Claremont led a small SMC party to meet this challenge. The route led from the Rhodes Memorial parking lot, up to the Block House and then up a very steep rock face to the derelict fire-watch hut. The knife-edge scramble left more than a few of us holding onto the rocks quite tightly, and there were several more steep areas with looming drops below before we could tackle the final ascent. A



shady lunch spot between the three trig beacons was a great reward, and we slowly walked down to the 500m contour through the head-height Proteas and to an old cork tree forest. The day

was much hotter than had been expected, and we were able to speak to some underprepared hikers to turn them around before they tried to tackle the slopes. The team made a bee-line for the Rhodes Memorial restaurant, and some cold Cokes were dispatched in quick succession. After the recent fires, we can only hope that the Restaurant is back on its feet soon, and that the Fynbos regrows quickly for many other hikers to enjoy.

Peter Otzen - Regional Coordinator Land Activities

Ed. People interested in joining SMC hikes should email Peter at peter.otzen@scouts.org.za

upton shield 2021

A new Path to Hawequas - On the 16th May this year the annual Upton Shield got back on schedule. The junior hiking competition attracted an above-expected 54 teams, totalling over 200 young scouts. While one of the first cold fronts of winter made the weather a close call — in the end it was a splendid Sunday, and the scene was set for another great day for scouting.

The route started on the road to Wellington, just after the Hawequas turnoff. A brisk and calm morning was soon buzzing with the descent of all 54 teams. From there the scouts trekked up to Upland Organic Farm, and down to the Spruitrivier. Over 25 bases followed, along with some STAs. The bases were challenging but taught some new things and made for a memorable journey along the river and through the olive and Buchu plantations.

Thank you to our neighbouring farmers Elsie, Edmund, and Kelvin for hosting the competition on their land. This was a new side of Hawequas that not many would have experienced before. Now that we have, we look forward to future adventures along this new path to Hawequas.

These competitions would not be what they are without the scouters and scouts whose skill and experience make these activities fun and engaging. Thank you to the over 30 judges who volunteered their efforts. A special thanks to Nigel Forshaw for his perennial support and wisdom in planning these competitions, and to Johann Harzon for going above and beyond in assisting with planning and coordination of the competition. To end, the solution to the Morse Code base was:

-.-. / ..- / .- - / .-. .- -.- - . . -. "C U at Rayner"

Lawrence Stanton-Upton Shield Chief Judge



upton shield 2021



upton shield 2021



upton shield 2021

1	1st Claremont A	189	32	2nd Plumstead A	93
2	1st Claremont B	162	35	1st Ottery B	92
3	2nd Bergvliet C	160	36	1st Somerset B	91
4	1st Pinelands B	156	36	2nd Fish Hoek B	91
5	6th Rondebosch A	154	38	1st Pinelands C	90
5	2nd Bergvliet A	154	39	1st Bothasig A	89
7	1st Muizenberg A	152	39	1st Claremont E	89
8	1st Claremont D	151	41	1st Muizenberg D	87
9	Fish Hoek Girl Guides	150	42	1st Muizenberg B	86
10	9/16th Cape Town B	147	43	2nd Fish Hoek A	85
11	1st Gordons Bay	146	44	1st Belvedere C	84
12	1st Durbanville A	143	45	1st Monte Vista C	83
13	1st Durbanville B	136	45	1st Stellenbosch B	83
14	1st Belvedere B	134	47	1st Ottery A	81
15	1st Monte Vista A	132	48	1st Muizenberg C	80
16	1st George	131	49	1st Naruna/Constant A	79
17	1st Stellenbosch A	130	50	2nd Plumstead B	78
18	6th Rondebosch B	129	51	1st Naruna/Constant B	75
19	9/16th Cape Town A	127	51	1st Ottery C	75
20	1st Pinelands A	123	53	1st Somerset West A	74
21	1st Somerset West C	122	54	1st Fish Hoek	70
22	2nd Bergvliet B	120			
23	1st Camps Bay B	112			
23	1st Belvedere A	112			
25	2nd Somerset West A	106			
25	1st Camps Bay A	106			
25	3rd Pinelands A	106			
28	1st Claremont C	104			
29	3rd Pinelands B	99			
30	2nd Fish Hoek C	96			
31	Durbanville Kraaifontein	94			
32	2nd Somerset West B	93			
32	1st Claremont F	93			



Ldc1 and Ldc2 courses



One of the many questions which a new Scout in the Movement asks is "where do I fit in?" The one-day LDCs (Leadership Development Courses - known as LDC1 and LDC2) attempt to give young entrants to Scouting the insight that they need in order to operate in the patrol and troop setting. The courses make use of the Patrol System and include sessions on the role of the PL and APL, How to Instruct, patrol meetings, and of course scout skills, all presented by a PL. This year, as was the case in 2020, the courses were held in a dispersed format, with 160 Scouts from around the Region hosted at their various PQs' preferred locations, ranging in distance between Blaauwberg, Somerset West, Tygerberg, and the Sea Scout Base. A special thank-you goes to the leaders, Scout and adult, who

provided their time and resources to run these bases.

Peter Otzen - Regional Coordinator Land Activities



new springbok scouts

We congratulate our latest Springbok Scouts who are:

Dominic Holling	2nd Hout Bay
Ewan Blamire	1st Bergvliet
Kelwin Sandeman	1st Camps Bay
Kyle Sasman	2nd Plumstead
Lucia Schmutz	2nd Somerset West
Rebecca Sparg	1st Claremont
Simon Bean	1st Claremont
Tara Casaleggio	1st Durbanville
Thomas Roomes	1st Claremont



from the archives

The below stamps were issued and sold by The Council of the Boy Scouts Association of the Union of South Africa in 1957 with the aim of raising £100,000. This was to celebrate 50 years of Scouting. Ten of the stamps illustrate the Scout Law and two commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Lord Baden-Powell.

Ed. Stamps loaned from Mauro and Debby Saporetto with thanks.



hawequas goings on

Covid 19 is affecting goings on at Hawequas but there are some activities happening which are reported on elsewhere in this issue.

The 6th Rondebosch Rover Crew Squire Project of Rhys Ravat tackled a project to get rid of new pines that have sprung up, from Lone Gum Tree spot on the North Circular route, down to just above the workshop. The project was tackled with great gusto by fourteen Rovers over a period of four day – a fantastic result was achieved – we need more groups to come to Hawequas and help us to conserve our valuable Fynbos.



hawequas goings on

The Mighty Hawequas Polar Bear Swim took place again on the Saturday closest to the mid winter Solstice. As we were already in the third wave we planned to keep it low key. The day dawned perfect, with blue skies and a gentle berg wind that pushed temperatures up to 28 degrees!

We had a record turnout of our neighbours and four scouting adults, nineteen locals all jumping into the dam at midday, with much laughter and excitement. All this was done with social distancing and a quick jump in and out of the water. Some of the neighbours ran to Hawequas, while others cycled to get to us. Some of the scouting folk did a hike on our beautiful trails in the morning before the swim. Come and be a Polar Bear with us next year!

Our Fynbos Restoration Project is continuing, with John Wilson leading our casual workers with amazing results.

What can you do to get involved?

- We had the DK Group putting in a couple of very productive hours on one of their camps, aided by John and Arnold – Speak to Kuba on what you and your group can do, or even a group of friends!
- A week of clearing costs us R800 – which comes from donated funds – make a donation, have an event to raise funds to make a donation, tell your granny to make a donation.
- Structure into your programme at your camps some time for alien clearing, instead of PT – far more beneficial to all and Hawequas – yes I am talking to you – the course leaders!

Kuba Miszewski - Hawequas Manager

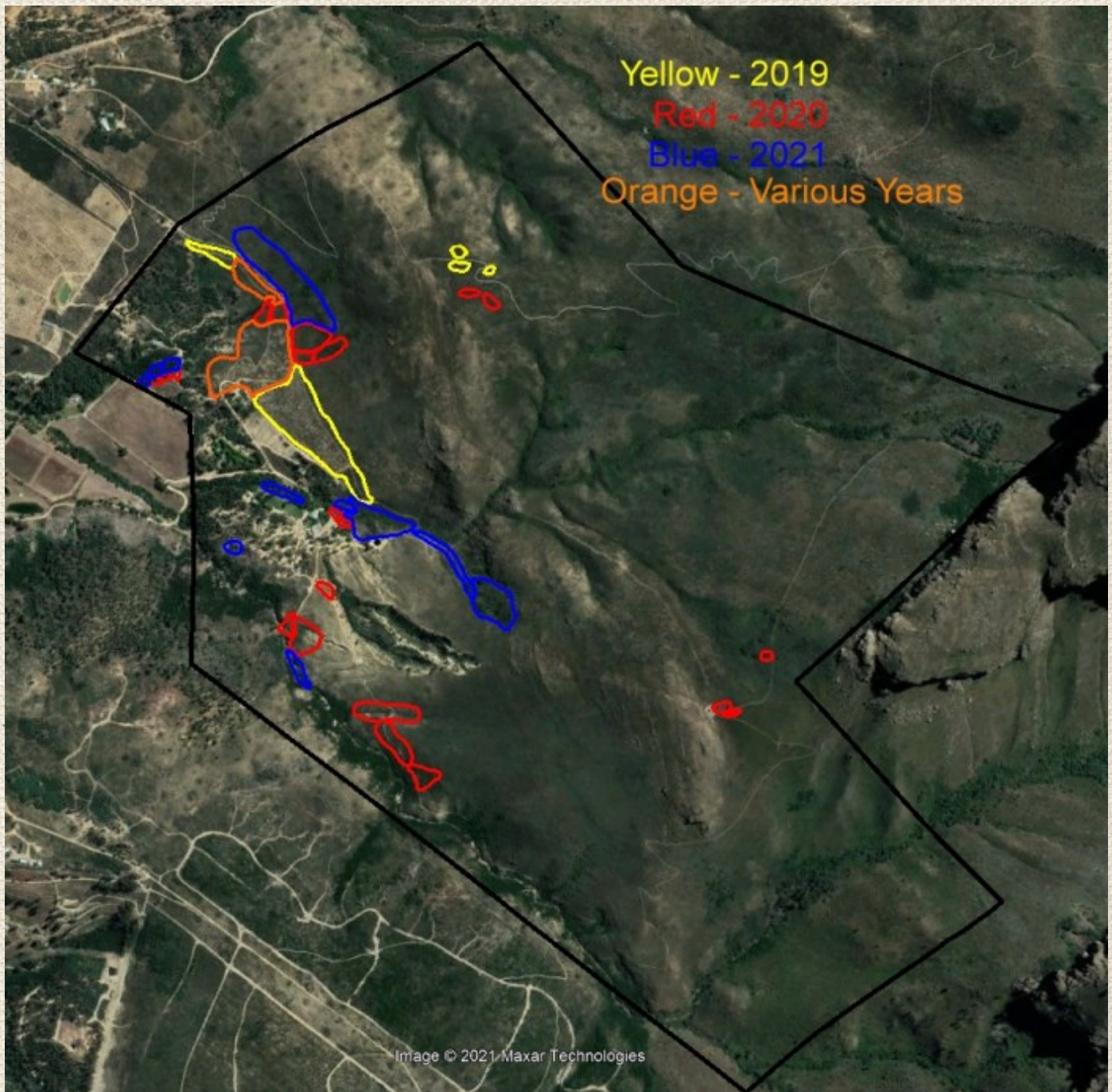


hawequas fynbos restoration

In 2019 a project was started at Hawequas to control alien vegetation. The biggest threat is from Black Wattle which is spread by birds and is highly invasive. Alien Gum Trees, Hakea and Pine are also being removed as part of the project. The project is dependent on support from donors who contribute financially. This allows the employment of local farm workers who remove the aliens. They are managed by John Wilson and Kuba Miszewski. John, many thanks, has been a stalwart of the project in the guiding and training of the workers.

This is an ongoing project which requires decades (yes) of work and is dependent on the kind of support we receive from our donors. Many thanks to them. 6th Rondebosch Rovers, 2nd Somerset West, Durbanville Kraaifontein and Pinelands High School have also assisted.

The below map shows areas that have been cleared in 2019, 2020 and 2021.



smc helderberg dome

The route begins through the reserve along a forested single track and then opens up onto a main jeep track heading for the base of the dome. We climbed largely in the shade up to a view point where you can look out over the whole of the Lourensford valley and towards Strand/Gordons Bay. The climb continues and becomes a single track path again that winds its way up the east side of the mountain towards the saddle between West Peak and the Dome itself.

There are a few red herring trails that break away from the main path, one of which caught us off guard but not long after we were back on track and nearing the saddle. From here there are sprawling views of the greater Cape Town area, you can see from Muizenberg through to Milnerton to Paarl - a must see if you're ever in the area!



This particular hiking group was hiking fit and hardly stopped for 2 minutes at a time before continuing on up the mountain. We traversed along the North West cliff side towards the dome - this path is always longer than one would expect and we

eventually reached the base of the Dome's climb. This part is essentially climbing up a waterfall or at least it feels like it, I should confirm - this is a real path it has just seen better days.

After another short stop at the second saddle between the Dome and its smaller neighbour we walked under one of the largest sheer cliff faces I have ever seen. The rock goes straight up for what I estimate is over 100m. From here there's just a false peak or two until you're right on top standing next to the remnants of a trig beacon. We made it up in just over 3 hours which was faster than planned but gave us ample time for lunch. That was until the wind picked up and we opted to head down before the goosebumps set in.

The route is an out and back, so we came back down the same way choosing not to extend past West Peak. The route is tough on the knees but otherwise made for a speedy descent and we were back at the reserve gates in no time.

Well done to all the scouts, scouters and rovers who made their way up the mountain, definitely worth another visit next year. I'm proud to report no injuries and no broken spirits at the end of this hike.

Laura Troost - ATS and Rover 1st Pinelands

first aid badge course

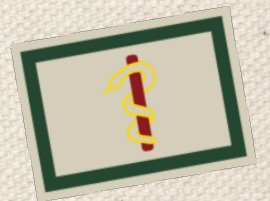


The First Aid Scoutcraft badge course was recently run at the 2nd Bergvliet Scout hall. As part of a Scout's advancement, first aid is one of the requirements and during these Covid times, the need for a course has been ever more present. The Region opened applications up for a first aid course and over 100 Scouts applied. We decided to limit the course to 24 applicants. The first of these courses was run on 19-20 June 2021. Scouts learnt how to place a patient in the recovery position and to perform CPR. These are two of the more practical sections of the course which were made ever more challenging to ensure Covid protocols were met. It was truly an incredible experience to see all these eager minds learn all these new things: from fixing someone's cut to splinting

an arm, to learning how to manage an emergency scene. I look forward to running another course and seeing even more of our amazing Region!

Connor Winter - ATS 1st Muizenberg and Ironwood Rover

(Ed. Connor is motivated by the Rover motto which is "Service")



91 year old mystery solved

The records in the Scout Archives reveal that during the 1920's and 1930's, it was a period often referred to as the 'golden years' of Rovering in the Western Cape. There was a membership of around two hundred and that they competed for an annual Rover Competition Shield.

During World War II (1939 - 1945) it was reported that 81 Rovers were on Active Service and that no further Rover Shield Competitions took place. The original Trophy somehow disappeared without trace during this time and Rover Competitions never quite took off again.



Now 91 years later (2021) a 1st Stellenbosch Scout discovered the old Rover Trophy and with the help of the Heritage Team the mystery was solved. Sarah of 1st Stellenbosch Troop recalls:

"It was a simple and easy task it just needed to be found, there was one day when a few of us scouts decided to tidy up our hall. We got to the old storage tromels (Ed. trunks) that had just been sitting there as our bench, we opened it and there it was the shield along with a few other trophies. At first, we didn't put much thought into it but after a month I decided to try find out about it.

The shield was an easy restoration the hard part was the picture it took a lot of scrubbing."

After the war Rover numbers were once again beginning to increase and in 1948 a new trophy was introduced. It was named the 'Hawkeye' Trophy, which was the Scouting name for the then Divisional Commissioner Dr F H Dommissie.

Sadly just prior to the 1963 competition, burglars totally destroyed the trophy, probably so they could steal the knife, but luckily a replica was ready for that year's competition and is still being used today.

So, what hidden treasures are hiding in the back of some storeroom in your Scout Hall? The Heritage Team, from its vast archives can help you identify old memorabilia, and if you don't want it, we would love to add it to our collection.

Stuart Ravenscroft - The Heritage Team



outdoorsman badge



In March 2020, the annual Survivor Camp for 10 year old Cubs was one of the last normal events before lockdown. We could not hold the 2021 camp, but Simon Grantham, Valeska Gruenbaum and team planned a one-day Outdoorsman Badge course instead, using the activities from the Survivor Camp. Stormy weather caused a postponement by 2 weeks but we went ahead in late May on the second attempt despite another rainy forecast.



Nearly 80 Cubs arrived at Hawequas and,

after screening and receiving their "Survivor" mug, began the activities: axe skills, fire safety, wows and roosterbrood on a fire, and shadow stick navigation using the sun – actually a powerful torch, with the sun away behind the clouds and rain! After lunch, the activities included water filters, a Survivor-style challenge race, making fires, and building shelters. A fun

and successful day under difficult conditions, and the participants ended with their badge and one step closer to their Leaping Wolf.

Tragically, a few weeks after this course, Valeska Gruenbaum died from Covid complications. Valeska was the DC of Helderberg and founded the Survivor Camp with Simon Grantham.



outdoorsman badge



Hundreds of Scouts and Cubs will remember her amazing catering on those events – including baking cinnabons for 100 people in time for breakfast – but especially for the unforgettable Survivor food challenge, which she loved and presented with deadpan style in blue surgical gloves. She also managed much of the admin and arranged the badges, mugs, buffs and banners which brought the Survivor style to the camp. She had just started 2 new Scout groups in her community and was registered for the Wood Badge course. It's hard to imagine that the Outdoorsman Course was the last time we saw Valeska, managing the

Hawequas kitchen with her usual boundless energy, efficiency and humour. What a huge loss to Scouting, and especially to Katherine, Joshua and Simon.

Ian Webb - Scout Group Leader 1st Claremont

sea scout base

The Covid restrictions of 2020 put a serious dent in the plans for running all the water-based badge courses at the Sea Scout Base (SSB). Some of the most popular and well attended courses had to be postponed, and it was with much relief that we heard this April that courses could run again.



The first challenge was our discovery that most of the Scouts were not aware of recent changes to some of the badges, and the addition of new ones. For instance, the Boatman Interest Badge is now called Oarsman, not to be confused with the new Oarsman Scoutcraft Badge which used to be the old Watermanship Badge, which in turn has been greatly reduced in scope and replaced by the new Watermanship Scoutcraft Badge, which Scouts now need to pass before the Sailing Scoutcraft Badge or the new Oarsman Scoutcraft Badge can be earned (unless the Scouts has the old Watermanship badge). Remembering too, that Scouts need to be able to swim before doing any of these badges, and must pass the Swimming Scoutcraft Badge which is not quite as advanced as the Cub Aquanaut or Open Water Swimmer badges.

With the lifting of restrictions by Scouts SA in April, and winter just around the corner, we were challenged to make up the backlogs by advertising the courses, processing applications and getting Scouts in boats by the first weekend in May. Oarsman Interest kicked off first with about 15 Scouts (par for the course for this senior badge), spending two weekends rowing around Zandvlei (but don't let them hear you say 'rowing' – it's called 'pulling').

The following weekend almost one hundred younger Scouts descended on the SSB - the pent-up demand after a year of nothing! Creative juggling and 'piggybacking' by Rob Schmid and his training team managed to get all the applicants for Watermanship and Oarsman Scoutcraft into the boats and through their respective courses.



As if this wasn't enough of a challenge, we had two more curved balls thrown at us.

sea scout base

Firstly, the National Canoe Championships on the vlei, with their courses set right through our training area, which we thought to resolve by applying a tried and trusted Sea Scout principle – the with the biggest boat gets right of way!



They were too fast for us, though. The other challenge affected the second weekend of the Oarsman Scoutcraft course – the vlei was closed by the City of Cape Town due to water contamination, so we had to keep everyone ashore. Luckily, the good weather during the first weekend meant that all the practical work on the water had been adequately covered.

Next up is the Boatswain Interest Badge in July, Ship Quartermaster in August, and Sailing Scoutcraft in August and September. We will keep a weather eye on Covid, but it's pretty safe out there on the water with the wind in your hair, the warm sun on your skin, etc, etc, just don't drink the water.

Jim Cairns - Sea Scout Base and PS 2nd Fish Hoek



city nature challenge 1st claremont

1st Claremont has taken part in the City Nature Challenge every year so far, and in 2021 we included our new Meerkats and their families for the first time. The Cubs and Meerkats made their observations in their gardens or nearby parks and also on a bioblitz run by Friends of the Liesbeek River. The Scouts organised a nature observation hike in Silvermine East. Some of the best observations were bird photos taken with a zoom lens at Intaka Island, but there were plenty of great photos from participants on phones as well. In total we had 46 participants and submitted nearly 1100 observations, plus another 200 that were outside the city limits for the challenge.

Ian Webb - SGL 1st Claremont



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